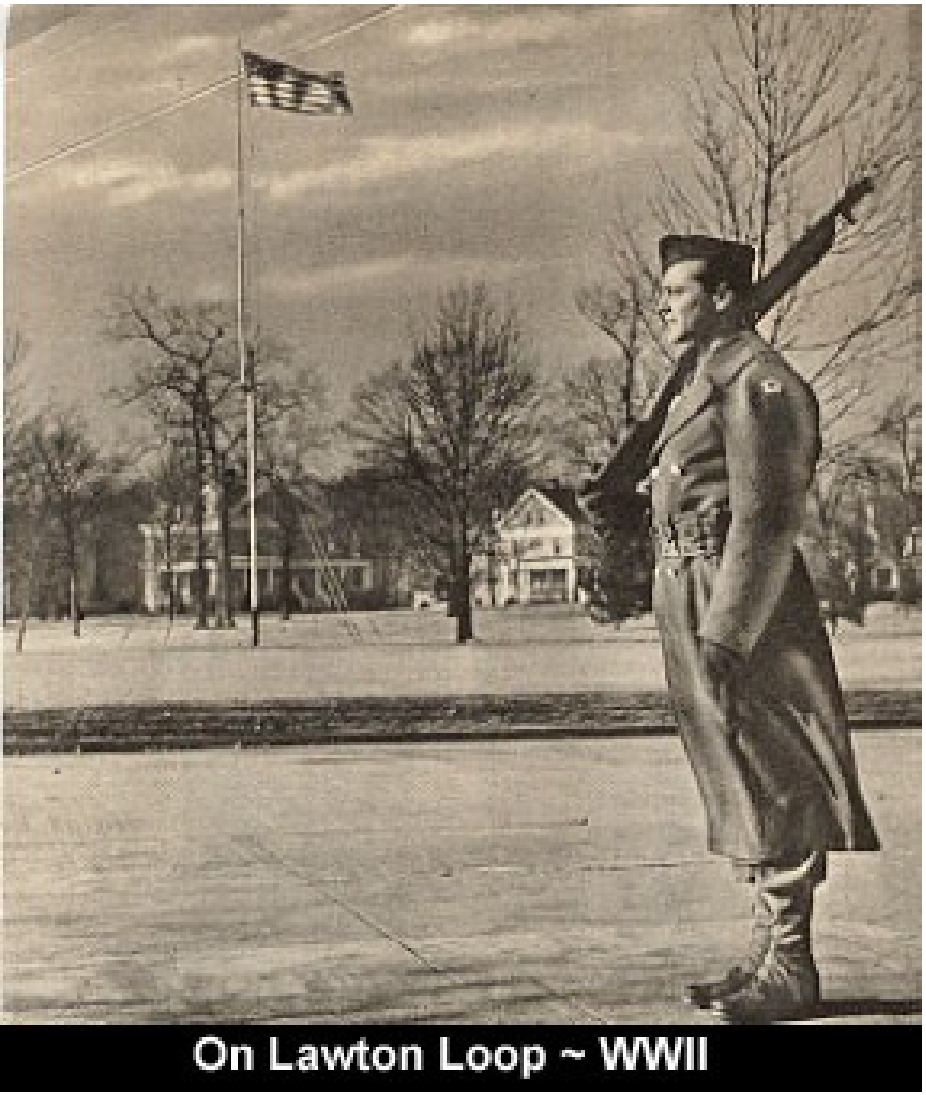
Base Closure and Reuse
FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON
CASE STUDY
Lawrence, Indiana

INDIANA DIVISION OF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
AND ARCHAEOLOGY

FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON OUTLINE


On Lawton Loop ~ WWII

- FBH Reuse Timeline
- Success Stories and Mishaps
- Advice for Future BRAC P.A.s (from an SHPO Perspective)

Fort Benjamin Harrison Reuse Timeline

- April 12, 1991, FBH listed on BRAC list for closure
- 1991-1992, Developers, environmentalists, preservationists, and elected officials express interest and develop strategies for re-use (huge media debate begins)
- December 1, 1991, Fort Harrison Re-use Authority is formed by city leaders (Indianapolis and Lawrence)

Fort Benjamin Harrison Reuse Timeline

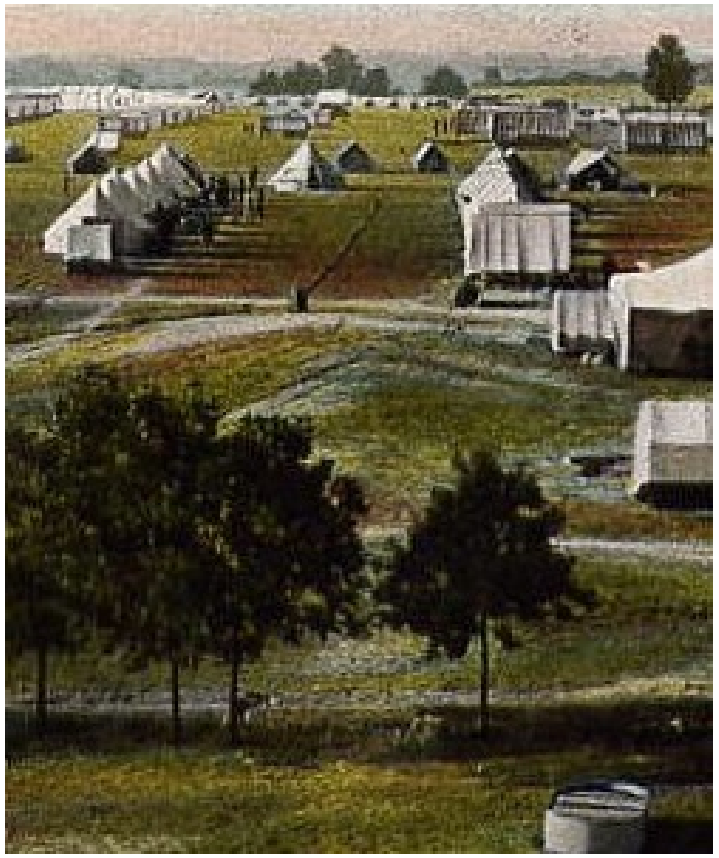
- 1993- Dept of Defense awards Legacy Grant to Fort Harrison Re-Use Authority for survey, documentation, and National Register nomination of FBH's historic resources
- 1993-A Legacy funded study is produced that advocates multiple use (nature preserve, state park/recreation, housing, retail/commercial, hotel, professional office space, and light industry) Fantastic Compromise!

Fort Benjamin Harrison Reuse Timeline

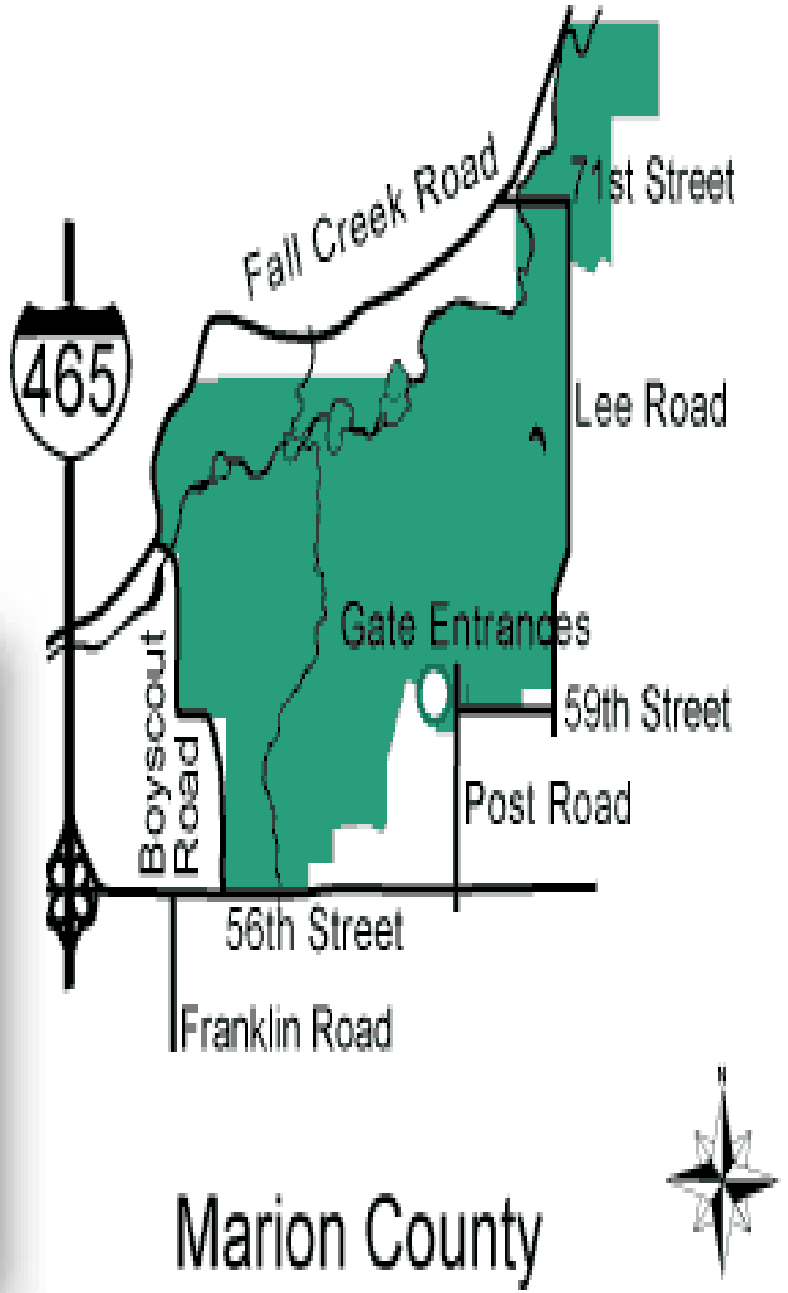
- May, 1995, DoD, ACHP, IN-SHPO, Fort Harrison Re-Use Authority, and Fort Harrison Historical Society sign the Programmatic Agreement to direct the re-use development
- June, 1995 Fort Harrison Historic District is placed on the National Register. (340 acres and several hundred contributing resources)

P. A. Successes!

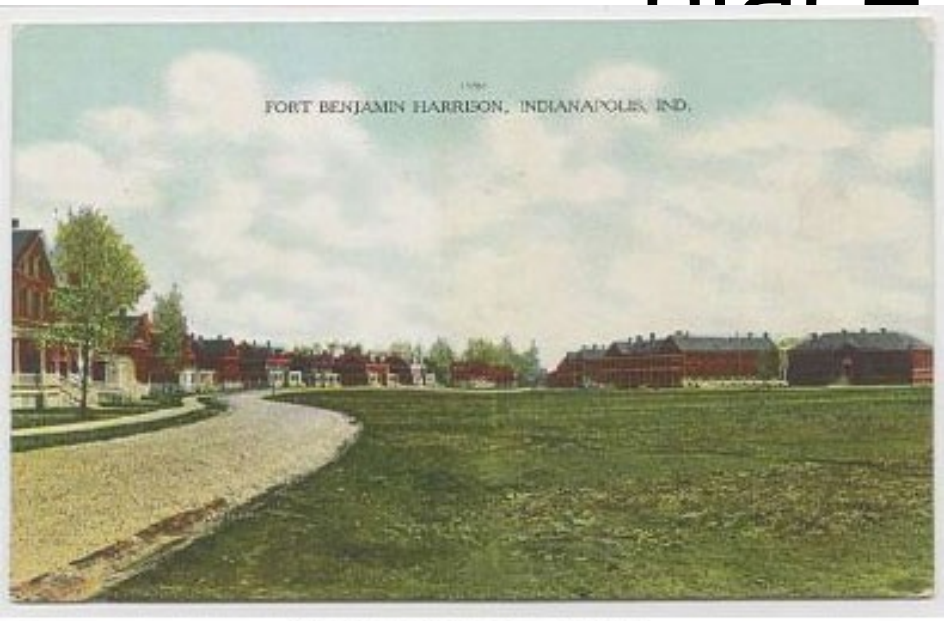
- Fort Harrison State Park (2,500 acres, nature preserve, trails, extensive recreation facilities)
- Fort Benjamin Harrison PUD Planned Unit Development zoning plan adopted by county
- Covenant restrictions on alteration of historic properties
- Certified historic rehabilitation tax credit incentives for historic properties



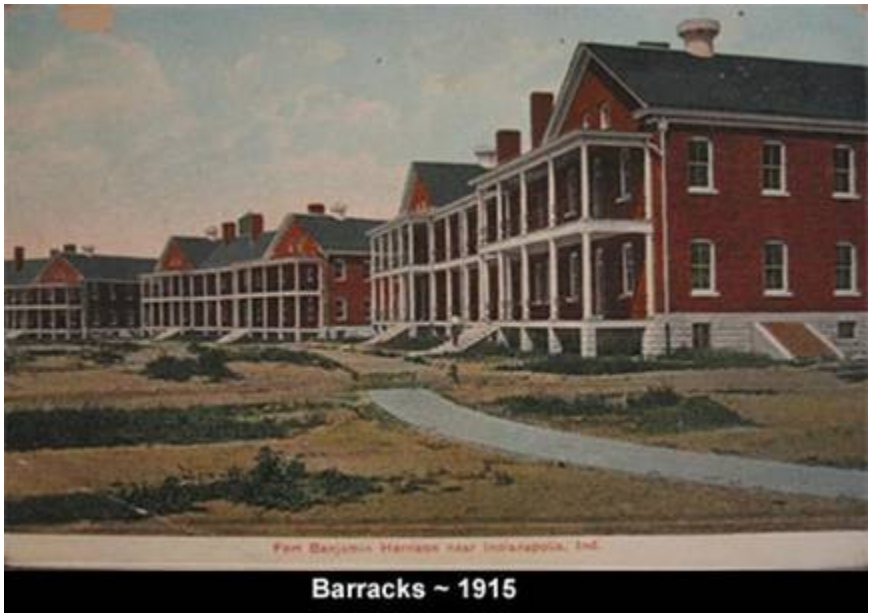
Fort Harrison State Park, An immense multi-us asset to metro In



Open Space Preservation
The state park and nature preserve protect the sense of place at FBH



Fort Harrison ~ 1909



Barracks ~ 1915

Fort Benjamin Harrison P.U.D.
Planned Unit Development zoning was adopted by Marion County

Finance Replacement Training Center Barracks - 1943

- **Flexible mixed use planning (without PUD zoning many of the re-use projects would not have been possible)**
- **Design guidelines tailored to distinctive areas of the Historic District were created specifically for FBH**

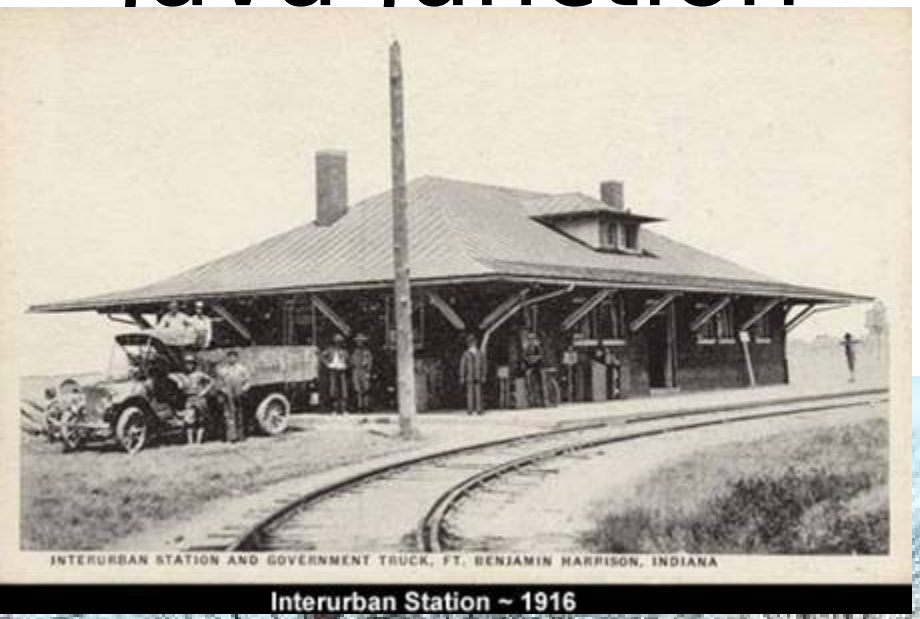
Success Stories and Mishaps

Quartermaster ~ 1910

change / Gym ~ 1917

Company Barracks ~ 1912

Tax Credit Rehabilitations: Java Junction



Interurban Station ~ 1916

Originally, the railway station for the fort, this building is now a café.

Historic Preservation Tax Credit

Rehabilitation: The Firehouse

Originally the base firehouse, this building is now the offices and reception space for a wedding planning company

Fire Department - 1908

Historic Preservation Tax Credit Rehabilitations: The Guardhouse

Originally constructed as the base jail, the building now houses the offices of an insurance agency

Guard House ~ 1917

What Did Not Work and Why

- Parcels were not systematically defined with consideration for historic setting and context

- Covenant review of alterations at historic properties were not enforceable. No punitive measures were spelled out in the P.A.

Demolition and Relocation of buildings without SHPO approval

Building #6, the Fuel Depot, was demolished without covenant review, SHPO approval, or other required procedure. To make way for a CVS Pharmacy. The IN-SHPO was placed in the middle of legal battle without any punitive ability per the PA!

Demolition and Relocation of buildings without SHPO approval

Building #622 was relocated without covenant review or required permits to make way for construction of new garages behind the Lawton Loop barracks buildings . Related grading damaged the historic ravine area, a major loss to the historic designed landscape.

Fireman Park at Fort Benjamin Harrison ~ Date unknown

Advice for BRAC P.A.s (from and SHPO perspective)

- SHPO will be the Whipping Boy for both Developers and Local Preservation Organizations! Not everyone is going to be happy all the time!
- Involve every conceivable organization and interest group as consulting parties…and document that their input was sought-every step of the way!

Advice for BRAC P.A.s (from and SHPO perspective)

- Make sure if you hold the covenants that there is a clear and spelled out punitive action that will hold up in court. Paper Tiger covenants don’t work!
- If there are areas within the historic base that should not be subdivided or re-plotted in order to maintain the historic context, spell this out in the PA and have appropriate punitive measures in place!

http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/